WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. Interfacing with a transportation system having a plurality of transportation service providers serving a plurality of client organizations in a given area, a transportation coordinating system comprising:

first communication means for enabling the transmission of transportation orders or requests from individuals of the various client organizations;

at least one central computer operatively connected to said first communication means for receiving transportation orders or requests from said individuals; and

second communication means for operatively linking said central computer to management computers of the transportation service providers,

said central computer being programmed to automatically access preselected ones of said management computers in response to orders or requests received from said individuals over said first communication means,

said central computer being further programmed to have searches undertaken of databases or memories of said preselected ones of said management computers for available transportation vehicles of respective preselected transportation service providers,

said central computer being additionally programmed to obtain confirmations of available transportation vehicles able to pick up said individuals from respective pick up locations within predetermined time intervals after placement of said orders or requests by said individuals,

said central computer also being programmed to communicate said confirmations

to said individuals over said first communication means.

2. The transportation coordinating system of claim 1 wherein said central computer is further programmed with artificial intelligence software to learn transportation-related preferences of said individuals from repeated transportation orders or requests from said individuals, said central computer having a memory storing said preferences, said computer being additionally programmed to generate, based on the stored preferences of said individuals, completed transportation orders from partial transportation orders received from said individuals over said first communication means.

3. The transportation coordinating system of claim 1 wherein said central computer has a memory storing rules established by said transportation service providers, said central computer being further programmed to select among said preselected ones of said management computers partially pursuant to the stored rules.

4. The transportation coordinating system of claim 1 wherein at least one of said first communication means and said second communication means includes a global computer network.

5. The transportation coordinating system of claim 1 wherein said transportation service providers are all located within a single metropolitan region, said central

computer being supplementarily programmed to communicate with a management computer of a remote transportation service provider located in a distant metropolitan region remote from said single metropolitan region, said central computer being further programmed to secure a reservation for a transportation vehicle from the management computer of said remote transportation service provider, whereby an individual with an airline flight reservation may automatically obtain ground transportation service at a departure end and at a destination end of a flight.

6. A transportation coordinating method comprising:

over time, receiving multiple orders from each of a plurality of individuals for transportation vehicles, each of said orders specifying particulars of multiple transportation parameters;

using artificial intelligence software to detect, from said multiple orders, preferences of said individuals with respect to at least some of said multiple transportation parameters;

storing said preferences;

after the storing of said preferences, receiving requests from said individuals for transportation vehicles, said requests providing particulars with respect to only a limited number of said transportation parameters; and

automatically completing transportation orders from said requests pursuant to the stored preferences.

7. The method defined in claim 6, further comprising:

automatically accessing computers of a plurality of transportation service providers in response to the received orders, in order to determine availability of transportation vehicles; and

automatically providing confirmation of vehicle availability to the individuals placing the received orders.

8. The method defined in claim 7 wherein the individuals are employees of respective client organizations each having a service contract with at least one of said transportation service providers, the accessing of said computers being in accordance with the service contracts so that vehicles are provided to individuals only by those transportation service providers having contracts with the respective individuals' organizations.

9. The method defined in claim 7 wherein the providing of confirmation of vehicle availability includes checking availability in accordance with rules furnished by said transportation service providers.

10. The method defined in claim 7 wherein said transportation service providers are all located within a single metropolitan region, further comprising:

communicating with a computer of a remote transportation service provider located in a distant metropolitan region remote from said single metropolitan region;

automatically securing a reservation for a transportation vehicle from the computer of said remote transportation service provider, whereby an individual with an airline flight reservation may automatically obtain ground transportation service at a departure end and at a destination end of a flight.

11. The method defined in claim 6, further comprising transmitting the completed transportation orders to said individuals in response to said requests and requesting confirmation of said completed transportation orders.

12. The method defined in claim 6 wherein the receiving of the multiple orders, the using of artificial intelligence software, the storing of the preferences, the receiving of the requests, and the completing of the transportation orders are all performed in the absence of operator intervention.

13. The method defined in claim 6 wherein said orders are received over a computer network.

14. In a transportation system having a plurality of transportation service providers serving a plurality of client organizations in a given area, a transportation coordinating method comprising:

storing, for each of said client organizations, a list of said transportation service providers with which the respective client organization has service contracts;

also storing, for each of said transportation service providers, a set of rules pertaining to the provision of services by the respective transportation service provider to the client organizations with which the respective transportation service provider has service contracts;

receiving a plurality of orders from respective individual employees of the client organizations for transportation vehicles;

in response to the receipt of said orders, automatically or electronically accessing computers of particular transportation service providers selected in accordance with the stored lists; and

upon accessing of said computers, determining availability of transportation vehicles of said transportation service providers to fulfill said orders in accordance with the stored rules of the transportation service providers.

15. The method defined in claim 14, further comprising:

receiving, from said computers, signals encoding confirmations of vehicle availability; and

transmitting, to the individual employees placing transportation orders, digitally encoded confirmations of fulfillment of the respective orders.

16. The method defined in claim 14, further comprising:

over time, receiving multiple orders from each of the individual employees for transportation vehicles, each of said orders specifying particulars of multiple

transportation parameters;

using artificial intelligence software to detect, from said multiple orders, preferences of said individual employees with respect to at least some of said multiple transportation parameters;

storing said preferences;

after the storing of said preferences, receiving requests from said individual employees for transportation vehicles, said requests providing particulars with respect to only a limited number of said transportation parameters; and

automatically completing transportation orders from said requests pursuant to the stored preferences.

17. The method defined in claim 14 wherein said transportation service providers are all located within a single metropolitan region, further comprising:

communicating with a computer of a remote transportation service provider located in a distant metropolitan region remote from said single metropolitan region; and

automatically securing a reservation for a transportation vehicle from the computer of said remote transportation service provider, whereby an individual with an an airline flight reservation may automatically obtain ground transportation service at a departure end and at a destination end of a flight.

18. The method defined in claim 14 wherein the storing of the lists of said transportation service providers, the storing of the rules, the receiving of transportation

orders, the automatic or electronic accessing of computers of particular transportation service providers, and the determining transportation vehicle availability are all performed in the absence of operator intervention.

19. The method defined in claim 14 wherein said orders are received from the individual employees over a computer network.

20. A transportation management method comprising:

receiving, from an individual via an electromagnetic signal link, a digitally encoded order for a vehicle for transporting the individual from a particular location;

in response to the receipt of said order, automatically or electronically accessing a computer of a transportation service provider via a communications link to determine availability of a vehicle of said transportation service provider to fulfill said order;

receiving, from said computer, a signal encoding a confirmation of vehicle availability; and

transmitting, to said individual via said electromagnetic signal link, a digitally encoded confirmation of fulfillment of said order.

21. The method defined in claim 20 wherein the automatic or electronic accessing of said computer includes automatically or electronically accessing a database of said computer to determine presence of a vehicle of said transportation service provider within a predetermined region about said particular location.

22. The method defined in claim 20 wherein said individual is an employee of an organization, said transportation service provider being a one of a plurality of transportation service providers under contract to said organization, said computer being a first computer, further comprising:

in response to the receipt of said order and prior to the accessing of said computer of said one of said transportation service providers, automatically or electronically accessing a second computer of another one of said transportation service providers via a communications link to determine availability of a vehicle of said another one of said transportation service providers to fulfill said order;

automatically consulting a timer during the automatic or electronic accessing of said second computer;

upon passage of a predetermined time period after commencement of the automatic or electronic accessing of said second computer, and in the absence of receiving, from said second computer, a signal encoding a confirmation of vehicle availability, automatically or electronically accessing said first computer to determine availability of a vehicle of said one of said transportation service providers to fulfill said order.

23. The method defined in claim 20, further comprising operating a World Wide Web site, wherein the receiving of said order and the transmitting of said digitally encoded confirmation are carried out via said Web site.

24. The method defined in claim 20 wherein the receiving of said order, the accessing of said computer, the receiving of said signal and the transmitting of said digitally encoded confirmation are all implemented via a global computer network.

25. The method defined in claim 20 wherein the receiving of said order, the accessing of said computer, the receiving of said signal and the transmitting of said digitally encoded confirmation are all implemented in an absence of operator intervention.

26. The method defined in claim 20, further comprising:

receiving a plurality of transportation orders from said individual over time, said transportation orders specifying particulars of multiple transportation parameters; and

operating a computer under artificial intelligence software to determine a preference of said individual with respect to at least one of said parameters.

27. The method defined in claim 20 wherein said digitally encoded order is an encoded voice message, further comprising operating voice-recognition software to generate said digitally encoded order from voice-frequency pressure waves.

28. In a transportation system having a plurality of transportation service providers serving a plurality of client organizations in a given area, a transportation coordinating method comprising:

receiving an electromagnetic signal encoding an order from an individual employee of one of the client organizations for a transportation vehicle to convey the individual from a particular location;

in response to the receipt of said order, automatically or electronically accessing a computer of a limousine company via a communications link to determine availability of a car of said company to fulfill said order;

receiving, from said computer, a signal encoding a confirmation of car availability; and

transmitting, to said individual via said electromagnetic signal link, a digitally encoded confirmation of fulfillment of said order.

29. The method defined in claim 28 wherein the receiving of said electromagnetic signal, the accessing of said computer, the receiving of the confirmation-encoding signal and the transmitting of said digitally encoded confirmation are all performed in the absence of operator intervention.

30. A transportation reservation method comprising:

receiving, via a telecommunications link, a request for transportation identifying a customer and specifying, at least indirectly, a departure location and an airline flight number;

in response to said request, automatically or electronically searching an on-line database to determine particulars relating to said flight number;

upon the determination of the particulars relating to said flight number, automatically or electronically reserving a space on a first vehicle for transporting the identified customer from said departure location to a departure airport for an airline flight bearing said flight number; and

also upon the determination of the particulars relating to said flight number, automatically or electronically reserving a space on a second vehicle for transporting the identified customer from an arrival airport for said airline flight bearing said flight number.

31. The method defined in claim 30 wherein said telecommunications link is taken from the group consisting of a telephone connection, a global computer network, a private computer network, and an electromagnetic wireless connection.

32. The method defined in claim 30 wherein said telecommunications link includes a global computer network, further comprising automatically or electronically providing a confirmation to the customer after the reserving of space on said first vehicle and said second vehicle.

33. A transportation system wherein a plurality of transportation service providers serve a plurality of client organizations in a given area, the system comprising:

a memory storing, for each of the client organizations, a list of the transportation service providers with which the respective client organization has service contracts and

also storing, for each of the transportation service providers, a set of rules pertaining to the provision of services by the respective transportation service provider to the client organizations with which the respective transportation service provider has service contracts;

signal reception means for receiving a plurality of orders from respective individual employees of the client organizations for transportation vehicles;

a main computer operatively connected to said memory and to said signal reception means, said main computer being programmed to automatically or electronically access, in response to the receipt of the orders, management computers of particular transportation service providers selected in accordance with the stored lists,

said main computer being operatively connected to said management computers via a communications link, said main computer being additionally programmed to cooperate with said management computers to determine availability of transportation vehicles of the transportation service providers to fulfill the orders in accordance with the stored rules of the transportation service providers.

34. The system defined in claim 33 wherein said main computer is also programmed to transmit, to the individual employees placing transportation orders, digitally encoded confirmations of fulfillment of the respective orders.

35. The system defined in claim 33 wherein said main computer is programmed with artificial intelligence software to detect, from multiple orders received from the

individual employees over time, preferences of the individual employees with respect to at least some of multiple transportation parameters specified in the multiple orders,

said main computer being further programmed to:

store the detected preferences; and

automatically generate, pursuant to the stored preferences, completed transportation orders from partial transportation orders received from the individual employees for transportation vehicles.

36. The system defined in claim 33 wherein the transportation service providers are all located within a single metropolitan region, said main computer being further programmed to:

communicate with a computer of a remote transportation service provider located in a distant metropolitan region remote from the single metropolitan region; and

automatically secure a reservation for a transportation vehicle from the computer of the remote transportation service provider, whereby an individual with an an airline flight reservation may automatically obtain ground transportation service at a departure end and at a destination end of a flight.

37. A transportation coordination system comprising:

an electromagnetic communications link for receiving from an individual a digitally encoded order for a vehicle for transporting the individual from a particular location;

a main computer operatively connected to said communications link , said main

computer being programmed to automatically or electronically access, in response to the receipt of said order, a management computer of a transportation service provider to determine availability of a vehicle of said transportation service provider to fulfill said order, said main computer being different from said management computer,

said main computer being also programmed to transmit , to said individual via said electromagnetic communications link, a digitally encoded confirmation of fulfillment of said order upon receiving, from said management computer, a signal encoding a confirmation of vehicle availability.

38. The system defined in claim 37 wherein said main computer is programmed to operate a World Wide Web site, whereby said order is received and said digitally encoded confirmation is transmitted.